Amy Stern – 2012 Technology Class Reflection

I find that I have trouble implementing technology in my classes because I lack time to learn how to use the tools that I want the students to use. I learn best by utilizing the technology tools myself on a regular basis. I find that if I do not use the technology tool regularly, I tend to forget how to use it and thus don’t implement it in my classroom. I wanted to combat this attrition by learning about multiple tools and using them as much as possible.

I learned how to utilize multiple technology tools. Some of those tools I had had prior exposure to in previous trainings; however, this training afforded me the opportunity to practice. The instructor also had multiple ideas on how best to incorporate each tool into a classroom environment. We learned about wikis, Prezi, Glogster, Photostory, Vuvox, Animoto, Audacity, Garage Band, Screenflow, Camtasia, and Screencast. Mr. Warner was well versed on the benefits and pitfalls for each and every program. The class consisted of teachers at all different levels of technology integration. This mixture added to the overall learning for all students. Some of the teachers had been practicing with “flipped classrooms” and were able to share ideas on how to do this effectively in many different content area classes. The discussions were valuable and showed me that the concepts were viable to implement in my classes as well.

I have since implemented using many of the programs and am in the process of recording for my first “flipped classroom” experience. I will not have this completed prior to the end of the study group; however, Mr. Warner has agreed to work on me with the editing so that I will be able to have multiple podcasts ready to go for next year. I am excited about the potential this will create in my instruction next year.

I have worked closely with another English teacher who was taking the technology class. We both teach English 11 and common plan our curriculum throughout the year. We created a poetry project for the students to complete using glogster, which is the exemplar (in process) that I shared with the technology class in our last class. Tia and I have also been working on a memoir brainstorm project that would allow the students to pick from multiple technology programs to complete the assignment. This would allow student choice in selecting the medium that fits the presentation style that want. Additionally, we are working on creating some ACT review materials using an English 11 wiki page in combination with the materials we post on our individual webpages.

In addition to working with Tia, I have also forged new relationships with other content area teachers who are utilizing the flipped classroom. I was able to observe one teacher while she debriefed on a podcast that her students had watched the previous night. It afforded her more lab time to work with students since they had already covered learning the needed content the night before. I was able to see firsthand how this could free up practice and application time for students with teachers around to assist in the learning process.

I could see how technology could be used to create teams even across the district. I have started working with other AP teachers at Mountain Range and Northglenn using some of the technology tools I have learned about in this class. I also have seen how technology was utilized in the ELL training we completed in the last three years. I can see how podcasting can create new forms of communication.

My interaction with colleagues was invaluable and strengthened my learning experience. The rapport between the teachers in the technology class was wonderful. Everyone was willing to share their ideas, which was hugely beneficial for me.

One of my professional growth goals is to make a concerted effort to incorporate technology more in my classes. I have been very good about keeping a very detailed webpage; however, have not historically engaged students in technology projects in the classroom. I know that I need to use technology since it is an integral part of my students’ lives. I need to engage them in a way that they see as being meaningful. I can grow as a teacher in a way that better meets the students’ needs in the 21st century.

I plan on continuing my technology education. I have set up summer time to work on podcasting with my PLC teammate and our technology instructor. I also have a personal goal to practice using the technology tools more so that I become more adept and do not lose the knowledge I have gained. I am planning on taking the summer class offered through the ESC as well. I plan on signing up for any subsequent technology courses offered on site as well as researching outside classes that may assist me in becoming a more tech savvy instructor as I move forward in my career.